

DATE: May 18, 2015

TO: River and Mountains Conservancy Governing Board

FROM: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 11: Consideration of a resolution authorizing a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority for the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project (RMC15016).

PROGRAM AREA: Rivers and Tributaries

PROJECT TYPE: Planning

JURISDICTION: Territory wide – San Gabriel Valley Cities

PROJECT MANAGER: Luz Quinnell

Project:	Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project (RMC15106)	
Applicant:	Watershed Conservation Authority	
Program area:	Rivers and Tributaries	
Amount requested:	\$31,000	
Amount recommended for funding:	\$31,000	
RIVERS AND TRIBUTARIES PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA SUMMARY		
Factor	Project Score	Total Possible Points
1. Access Value	15	15
2. Cultural or Historic Resource Value	0	3
3. Educational / Interpretive Value	5	5
4. Habitat Value	4	21
5. Matching Funds	10	10
6. Public Health Value	6	6
7. Recreational Resource Value	13	13
8. Restoration Resource Value	1	3
9. Scenic Resource Value	2	2
10. Stakeholders / Partners Resource Value	3	4
11. Stewardship and Management Plan Value	5	5
12. Sustainability Value	3	6
13. Trails / Multi-use Trails	5	5
14. Urban Land Value	11	14
15. Water Resource and Quality Value	15	25
<u>TOTAL POINTS</u>	98	137

RECOMMENDATION: That the RMC authorize a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority in the amount of \$31,000 for planning expenses in support of the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project (RMC15016).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), County of Los Angeles Board Office of Supervisor Solis, County of Los Angeles Flood Control District (LACFCD), along with County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation and the non-profit Amigos de los Rios are collaborating partners on the Emerald Necklace Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan. The grant funds will secure matching funds for a feasibility study of the Master Plan identifying the design, construction and implementation costs of 44 distinct trail connections and greenway projects along the Emerald Necklace primarily located within the LACFCD right-of-way as well as the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation right-of-way, please see Exhibit A.

BACKGROUND: The Emerald Necklace is a 17-mile loop of proposed and existing parks, greenways, bikeways, and multiuse trails. This series of projects will connect the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo at Peck Road Water Conservation Park in the north and at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area to the south.

Currently, within the extent of the Emerald Necklace, there are existing Class I bikeways on the east bank of the Rio Hondo and the west bank of the San Gabriel River. Along the west bank of the Rio Hondo there are some recorded County "Riding and Hiking Trail" easements scattered throughout for the purpose of Parks and Recreation multi-use trails. While a continuous County multi-use trail is not currently developed along this location, there remains the opportunity to complete these trail connections in the future. An analysis was conducted early in the process to identify existing impediments and opportunities to create barrier free crossings at channel and railroad crossings, bridges, and/or underpasses for a seamless multi-use trail loop along the Emerald Necklace. Along the portion of the San Gabriel River within the 17-mile Emerald Necklace there is fragmented multi-use trails on the west bank and portions of the east bank. The Class I bikeways are operated and maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The multi-use trails are operated and maintained by Los Angeles County Department Parks and Recreation.

In 2005, Amigos de los Rios, a California nonprofit organization, in conjunction with various cities and stakeholders, developed a Vision Plan for the Emerald Necklace. The Vision Plan identified opportunities for development of greening and tributary channel naturalization projects along and in proximity to the San Gabriel and the Rio Hondo rivers. Utilizing planning funding contributions from LACFCD and Southern California Edison totaling \$500,000, the WCA retained the services of Withers & Sandgren/Blue Green consulting firms in 2010 to conduct the two year-long Feasibility Study process, which resulted in the identification and description of the 44 project included in the Emerald Necklace Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan (Exhibit A).

The Emerald Necklace Feasibility Study Committee prioritized 29 of the 44 projects and identified 16 of the 29 priority projects as Phase 1 projects. These Phase 1 projects are identified in Exhibit B. The County of Los Angeles, LACFCD, and Amigos de los Rios also continue to work with the WCA and its planning consultants to develop an Implementation Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impacts Report (PEIR) for these Phase 1 priority projects. This compressive environmental document will allow agencies, stakeholders and the public to understand funding needs, benefits, constraints and opportunities.

The WCA is requesting funding because during the process of preparing the Implementation Report and PEIR, the scope of work and budget was revised to focus on applying for a high priority grant and some portions of the programmatic environmental document and Implementation Report were left unfunded; therefore, to fund a portion of the current funding gap, additional contributions have been provided by the County of Los Angeles Board Offices (\$30,000) and the LACFCD (approx. \$11,000) to complete the funding gap. The WCA is requesting \$31,000 from the RMC in order to complete the Emerald Necklace Master Plan. The requested funding will be utilized to update and modify the project descriptions for the subsequent environmental analysis, as well as to develop cost estimates for the Phase 1 projects and to support WCA as the lead implementation plan coordination. A timeline and budget is provided for completion of the Implementation Plan and PEIR are included as Exhibit C.

The Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project when completed will provide an improved regional network of linear greenways, parks, and multi-use trails. It will also serve to connect residents from the Cities of Arcadia, Baldwin Park, El Monte, Irwindale, Monrovia, Rosemead, and South El Monte and portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County such as the communities of Bassett and Avocado Heights with Peck Road Water Conservation Park, Whittier Narrows Regional Park, and the amenities developed as part of the Emerald Necklace. The Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project will also provide educational benefits to the community through its interpretative signage illustrating information about the rivers, their habitats, and cultural heritage.

Staff is recommending funding for the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project given that it meets the RMC's mission to preserve open space and habitat in order to provide for low-impact recreation and educational uses, wildlife habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvements within the RMC's jurisdiction. In addition, the proposed project also meets the following RMC's Guiding Principles:

Improve Access to Open Space and Recreation for All Communities

- Accommodate active and passive recreational uses
- Incorporate passive and low-impact recreational facilities in habitat areas
- Accumulate and record the needs for active recreation facilities

Connect Open Space with a Network of Trails

- Develop continuous bike trail, equestrian, and public access systems along riverfronts and within the watershed
- Connect River trails to mountain trails, urban trails, local parks, open spaces, and beaches
- Connect open spaces to transit access points
- Provide for public safety and security along waterways and trails

FISCAL INFORMATION: This grant will award the WCA a total amount not to exceed \$31,000 of Proposition 84 funds for the planning expenses in support of the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project. And upon evaluation and a final score of 98 of the grant application, staff recommends funding with a project completion of July 30, 2016, please see Exhibit C: Budget and Tasklist and Timeline. There is no additional funding request anticipated for this project.

Funding for this project will be allocated from the following Proposition 84 allocations.

75050. The sum of nine hundred twenty eight million dollars (\$928,000,000) shall be available for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources in accordance with the following schedule:... (g) The sum of seventy two million dollars (\$72,000,000) shall be available for projects within the watersheds of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers according to the following schedule: (1) \$36,000,000 to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy pursuant to Division 22.8 (commencing with Section 32600).....

75060. The sum of five hundred forty million dollars (\$540,000,000) shall be available for the protection of beaches, bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including projects to prevent contamination and degradation of coastal waters and watersheds, projects to protect and restore the natural habitat values of coastal waters and lands, and projects and expenditures to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state, in accordance with the following schedule:.... (3) To the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.....\$15,000,000.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND RMC ADOPTED POLICIES/AUTHORITIES: Section 32602: There is in the Resources Agency, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, which is created as a state agency for the following purposes:

- (a) To acquire and manage public lands within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds, and to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvement within the territory.
- (b) To preserve the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River consistent with existing and adopted river and flood control projects for the protection of life and property.
- (c) To acquire open-space lands within the territory of the conservancy.

Section 32604: The conservancy shall do all of the following:

- (a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (b) Approve conservancy funded projects that advance the policies and priorities set forth in Section 32602.

Section 32614.5:

- (a) The conservancy may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of this division.
- (b) Grants to nonprofit organizations for the acquisition of real property or interests in real property shall be subject to all of the following conditions:
 - (1) The purchase price of any interest in land acquired by the nonprofit organization may not exceed fair market value as established by an appraisal approved by the conservancy.
 - (2) The conservancy approves the terms under which the interest in land is acquired.
 - (3) The interest in land acquired pursuant to a grant from the conservancy may not be used as security for any debt incurred by the nonprofit organization unless the conservancy approves the transaction.

- (4) The transfer of land acquired pursuant to a grant shall be subject to the approval of the conservancy and the execution of an agreement between the conservancy and the transferee sufficient to protect the interests of the state.
- (5) The state shall have a right of entry and power of termination in and over all interests in real property acquired with state funds, which may be exercised if any essential term or condition of the grant is violated.
- (6) If the existence of the nonprofit organization is terminated for any reason, title to all interest in real property acquired with state funds shall immediately vest in the state, except that, prior to that termination, another public agency or nonprofit organization may receive title to all or a portion of that interest in real property, by recording its acceptance of title, together with the conservancy's approval, in writing.
- (c) Any deed or other instrument of conveyance whereby real property is acquired by a nonprofit organization pursuant to this section shall be recorded and shall set forth the executor interest or right of entry on the part of the state.

RMC Resolution 2012-01 allowed staff to re-evaluate projects already received and projects must meet or exceed the RMC's criteria and guiding principles and funding must be identified before a recommendation is presented to the RMC Governing Board for approval. Further staff recommends funding planning expenses in support of the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project since it meets the RMC's guiding principles based on its goals, objectives, timeline, matching funds and ability to complete the project within the funds awarded and timeline approved.

EMERALD NECKLACE

FEASIBILITY STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

MASTER PLAN

Westside Trail - North

Airport Project Area - Peck Road Water Conservation Park to Valley Blvd.

- 1 Trail Development for Riding and Hiking from Lower Azusa Road to Water Conservation Park Loop Trail
- 2 At Grade Pedestrian Crossing w/Signal at Santa Anita Road or Underpass
- 3 At Grade Pedestrian Crossing w/Activated Signal at Lower Azusa Road and adjacent trail development
- 4 Trail Development for Riding and Hiking from Valley to Lower Azusa Road
- 5 Bridge at Arcadia Wash and adjacent trail development
- 6 El Monte Street Class II Bike Lanes and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing
- 7 Rio Hondo Pedestrian Bridge at Rio Vista Park to East Side
- 8 Underpass at Railroad Bridge
- 9 At Grade Pedestrian Crossing w/Activated Signal at Valley Blvd or Underpass

Airport Project Area - Eastside Project

- 10 Rio Hondo Eastside Access

Westside Trail - South

Valley Blvd. to Eaton Wash

- 11 Underpass Improvements at Interstate 10 and MTA Bridges for a Multi-Use Trail
- 12 Improve Gate and Ramp Access from Valley Blvd to Multi-Use Trail

Eaton Wash

- 13 Eaton Wash Trail Connection

Eaton Wash Park and Bridge to Eastside Class I Bike Path

- 14 Eaton Wash Pocket Park
- 15 Pedestrian Bridge across the Rio Hondo at the Eaton Wash Confluence

Eaton Wash to Garvey Ave.

- 16 Ride and Hike Trail from Rosemead Blvd to Eaton Wash
- 17 Underpass at Rosemead Blvd.
- 18 Connections to Rosemead Blvd from Ride and Hike Trail

Alhambra Wash to Garvey Ave

- 19 Multi-Use Bridge Crossing
- 20 Westside Multi-Use Trail Development

Legg Lake

- 21 Class I Bike Path from Rio Hondo to Legg Lake
- 22 Class I Bike Path Rosemead Blvd to Legg Lake
- 23 Class II Bike Lanes Durfee Ave to Legg Lake
- 24 Class I Bike Path thru Lario Creek to Legg Lake

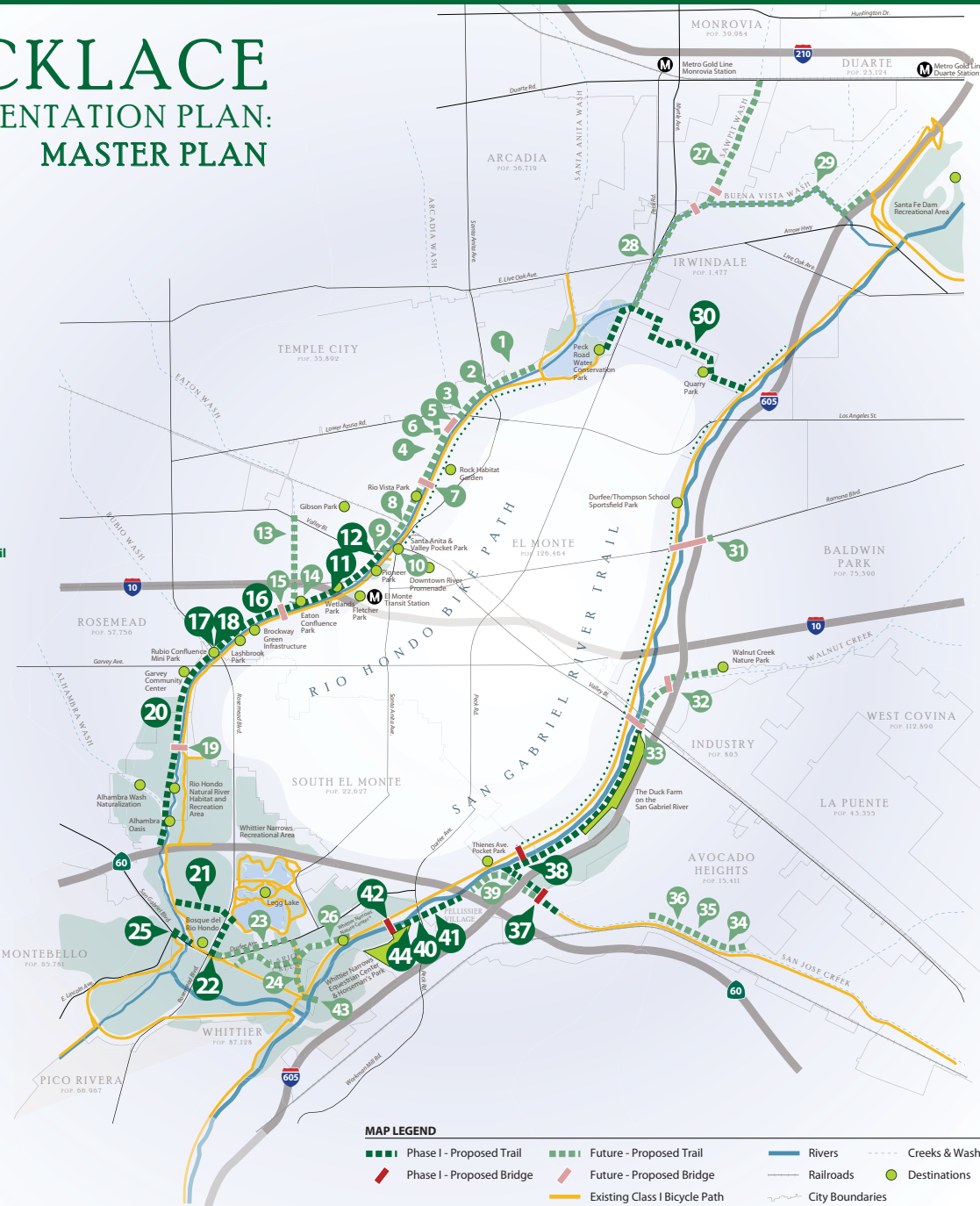
Lincoln Ave./Bosque Del Rio Hondo

- 25 Class I Bicycle Trail from Bosque del Rio Hondo to Lincoln Ave.

Lario Creek

- 26 Lario Creek Multi-Use Trail

PROJECT COMPONENTS



MAP LEGEND

- Phase I - Proposed Trail
- Future - Proposed Trail
- Phase I - Proposed Bridge
- Future - Proposed Bridge
- Existing Class I Bicycle Path
- "Green"-able Areas (Trees Allowed)
Plantable per Army Corps of Engineers' Lowes Vegetation Policy, where Right of Way is more than 15 feet from toe of dike or entrenched channel
- Rivers
- Creeks & Washes
- Railroads
- City Boundaries
- Destinations
- Metro Transit Connection

Sawpit Wash

- 27 Trail Development on Sawpit Wash North (north segment of Clasp Option)
- 28 Trail Development on Sawpit Wash South (south segment of Clasp Option)

Buena Vista Wash

- 29 Trail Development on Buena Vista Wash (Clasp Option) to San Gabriel River Trail

Quarry Clasp Option

- 30 Trail Development from Peck Road Water Conservation Park to San Gabriel River Trail

Ramona Blvd

- 31 Class II Bicycle Lanes on Ramona Blvd.

Walnut Creek

- 32 Duck Farm and Walnut Creek Nature Center Trail Connection
- 33 Valley Blvd. Bridge Crossing

Avocado Heights

- 34 Equestrian Trail BMPs
- 35 4th Ave Street End Equestrian Access
- 36 Equestrian Park and Staging

San Jose Creek

- 37 Extension of the San Jose Creek Bicycle Trail to the North Side
- 38 Extension of the San Jose Creek Bicycle Trail to the San Gabriel River Bicycle Trail
- 39 Bridge Crossing for Equestrian Access

Pellissier Village

- 40 Peck Road Bridge Access
- 41 Eastside San Gabriel River Multi-Use Trail Improvements

Whittier Narrows Equestrian

- 42 Multi-Use Bridge across San Gabriel River
- 43 Formalization of Equestrian in-channel trail crossing
- 44 Hardened Pedestrian Path adjacent to Equestrian Trail from Peck Road to Horseman's Park

EMERALD NECKLACE STEERING COMMITTEE:



PLANNING CONSULTANTS:



EMERALD NECKLACE






FEASIBILITY STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ~ PHASE I

The Emerald Necklace is an extraordinary 17-mile loop of bicycle and multi-use trails which links parks and open spaces along two waterways, the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo. Phase I's 16 projects will close gaps in this regional recreational trails network and increase access to hundreds of thousands of constituents. Ongoing efforts will also add gateways, signage and greening. Further phases identified in the feasibility study will continue to expand the system in following years, contingent on funding and public support.

Westside Multi-Use Trail:

A Trail for All User Groups

The primary benefit of this trail would be to create a continuous loop around the Emerald Necklace for equestrians, and improve recreational potential for all user groups. The secondary benefit is improving access to the Emerald Necklace system for west side communities.

- 12 **Multi-Use Trail:**
Alhambra Wash from
State Highway 60 to the
Garvey Community
Center with Gates,
Signage, etc.

 - 13 **Underpass at Rosemead Blvd.**

 - 14 **Street Access Ramps at Rosemead Blvd. with Gates & Signage**

 - 15 **10 Freeway Underpass Improvements**

 - 16 **Multi-Use Trail: Rosemead Blvd. to Valley Blvd.**


Whittier Narrows Connectivity:

Linking Existing Park Resources

Trail connections at the southern end of the necklace involve strategic placement of Class I Bike Trail segments and new Multi-Use Trails within the area. Internal circulation within the Whittier Narrows area will be improved so pedestrians and bicyclists can access all park areas currently inaccessible without a car.

- 5 **Class I Bicycle Path:**
On Rosemead Blvd.
to Legg Lake

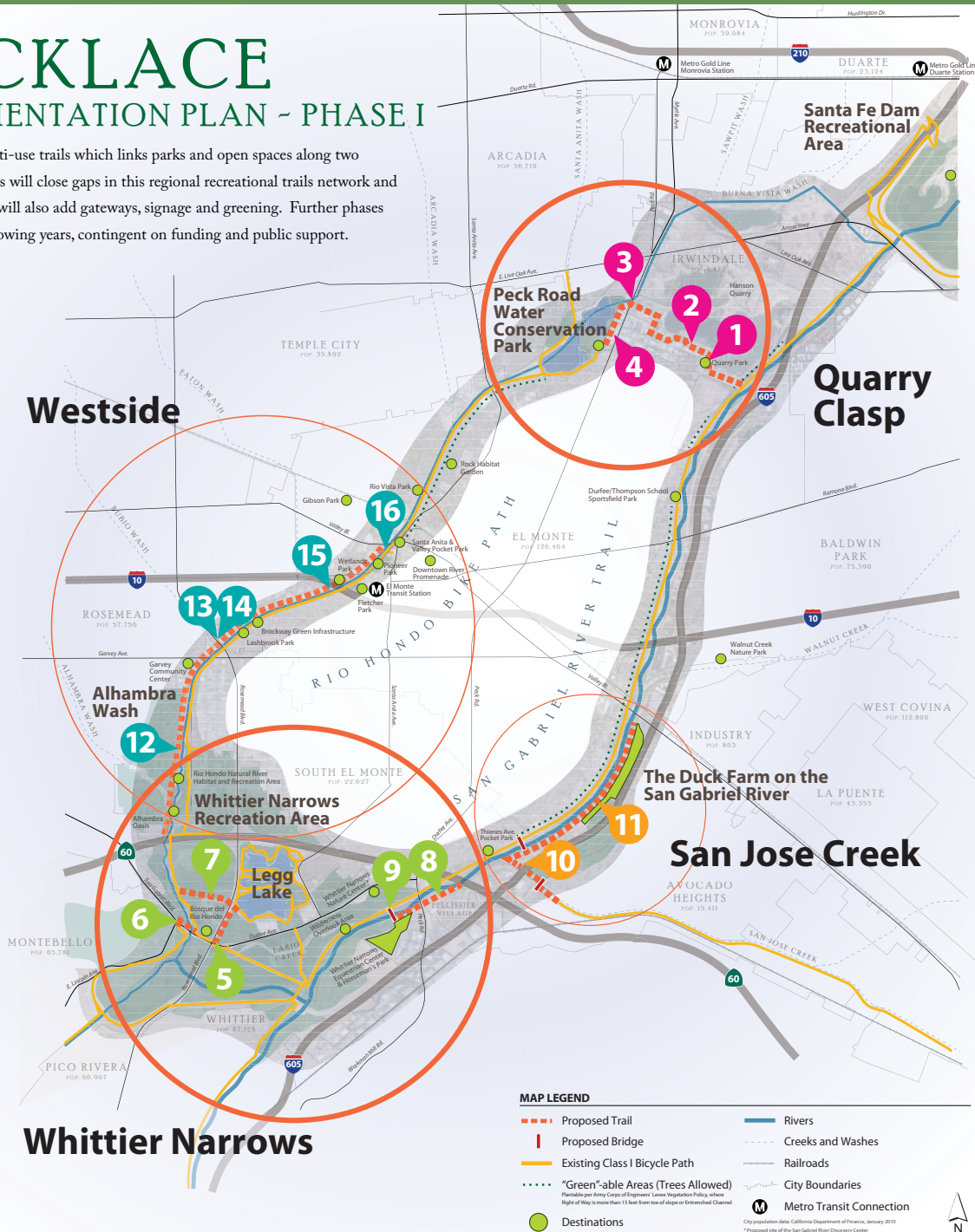
 - 6 **Class I Bicycle Path:**
From El Bosque del Rio
Hondo to Lincoln Av. on
San Gabriel Blvd. with
Enhanced Signalized
Crossing, Signage &
Wayfinding

 - 7 **Class I Bicycle Path:**
From the Rio Hondo to Legg
Lake through the Southern
California Edison Easement

 - 8 **Multi-Use Trail:**
Pellissier Village from
State Highway 60 to
Horseman's Park

 - 9 **Multi-Use Bridge:**
Pellissier Bridge at
Horseman's Park


PROJECT COMPONENTS



Quarry Clasp: *Completing the Loop*

Multi-Use Trail extension projects from Peck Road Water Conservation Park east to the San Gabriel River will connect the trail gap between the Class I bike paths on the Rio Hondo and the San Gabriel Rivers.

- 1 Park Development with Trail, Gates, Signage and Amenities**

- 2 Multi-Use Trail and Bike Paths**

- 3 Signalized Crossing at Peck Road with Signage and Wayfinding**

- 4 Rio Hondo Multi-Use Trail and Class I Bicycle Path: Connection in Peck Road Water Conservation Park**


San Jose Creek Regional Access:

Connecting Communities East of the San Gabriel River

Trail completions and creek/bridge crossings will improve access to the Emerald Necklace for a significant population east of the San Gabriel River.

- 10** Multi-Use Trails and 2 Multi-Use Bridges:
From San Jose Creek Trail to San Gabriel River Trail
- 
- 11** Multi-Use Trail:
From San Jose Creek to the Duck Farm on the San Gabriel River
- 

EMERALD NECKLACE STEERING COMMITTEE:



PLANNING CONSULTANTS:



RMC15016

Exhibit C: Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project

PROJECT TIMELINE

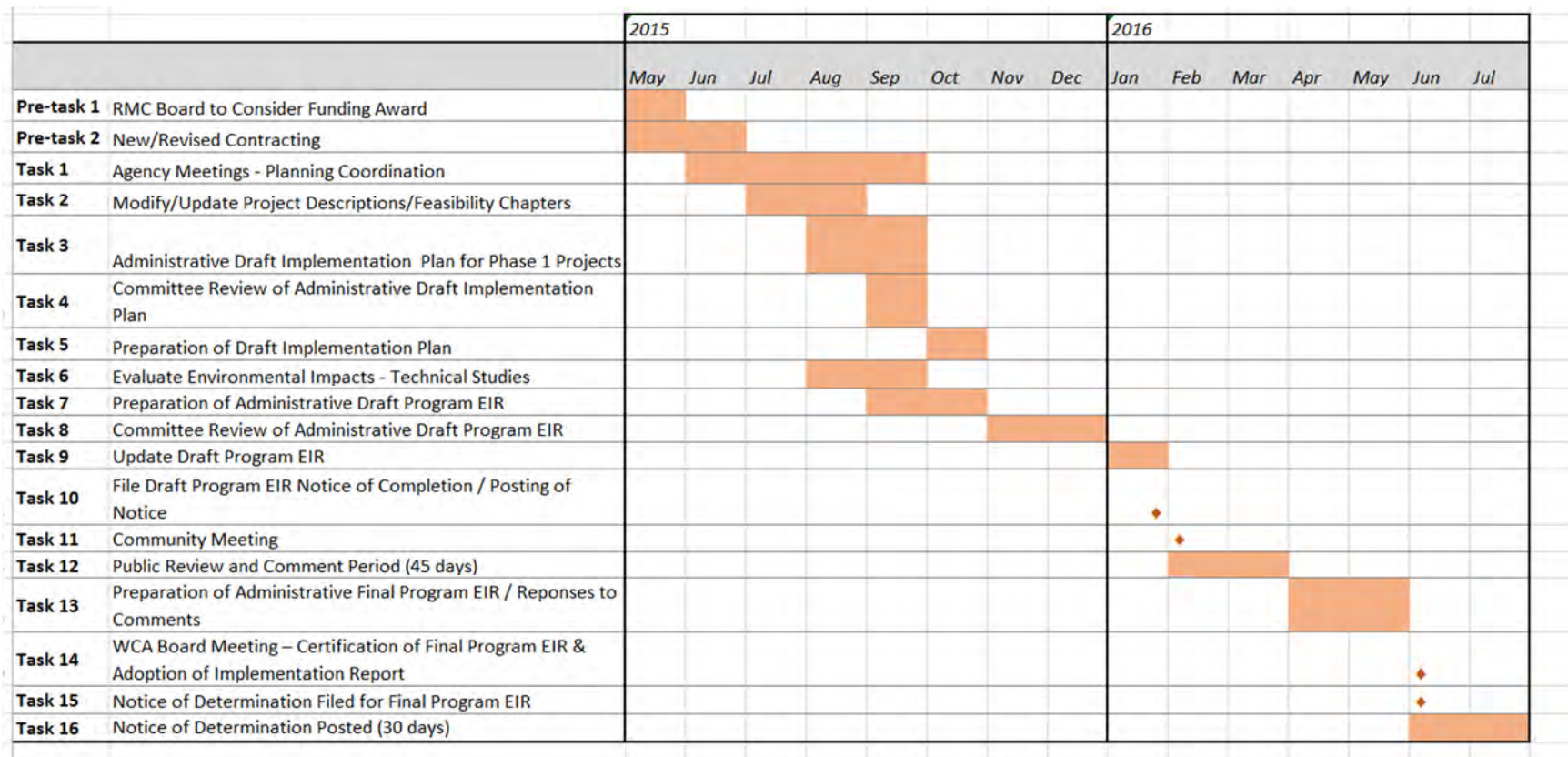


Exhibit C: Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project

PROJECT BUDGET

		Funds Remaining	Needed to Restore Scope	Total to Complete Scope	Funding Source	Requested RMC Funding
Task 1	Agency Meetings - Planning Coordination	\$ 5,780.00	\$ -	\$ 5,780.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
Task 2	Modify/Update Project Descriptions/Feasibility Chapters	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	RMC	\$ 7,000.00
Task 3	Preparation of Administrative Draft Implementation Plan	\$ 18,213.47	\$ 14,086.42	\$ 32,299.89	RMC/Remaining Project Funds/LACFCD/LACBOS	\$ 9,905.00
Task 4	Committee Review of Administrative Draft Implementation Plan	WCA PM Services				
Task 5	Preparation of Draft Implementation Plan	\$ 9,000.00	\$ -	\$ 9,000.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
Task 6	Evaluate Environmental Impacts - Technical Studies	\$ 6,700.00		\$ 6,700.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
Task 7	Preparation of Administrative Draft Program EIR	\$ 13,900.00	\$ 33,408.58	\$ 47,308.58	Remaining Project Funds/LACFCD/LACBOS	\$ -
Task 8	Committee Review of Administrative Draft Program EIR	WCA PM Services				
Task 9	Update Draft Program EIR	\$ 5,794.45	\$ 3,705.55	\$ 9,500.00	Remaining Project Funds/LACFCD/LACBOS	\$ -
Task 10	File Draft Program EIR Notice of Completion / Posting of Notice	WCA PM Services				
Task 11	Community Meeting	\$ 8,745.00	\$ -	\$ 8,745.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
Task 12	Public Review and Comment Period (45 days)	WCA PM Services				
Task 13	Preparation of Administrative Final Program EIR / Responses to Comments	\$ 9,900.00	\$ -	\$ 9,900.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
Task 14	WCA Board Meeting – Certification of Final Program EIR & Adoption of Implementation Report	WCA PM Services				
Task 15	Notice of Determination Filed for Final Program EIR					
Task 16	Notice of Determination Posted (30 days)					
	Sub Consultant Coordination/Admin	\$ 2,475.41	\$ -	\$ 2,475.41	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
	Direct Reimbursables	\$ 10,500.00	\$ -	\$ 10,500.00	Remaining Project Funds	\$ -
	WCA staff support as the lead implementation plan coordination	\$ -	\$ 14,095.00	\$ 14,095.00	RMC	\$ 14,095.00
	Totals:	\$ 91,008.33	\$ 72,295.55	\$ 163,303.88		\$ 31,000.00

May 18, 2015 – Item 11

RESOLUTION 2015-13

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC) AUTHORIZE A
GRANT TO WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY IN SUPPORT
OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE MASTER PLAN PROJECT
(RMC15016).

WHEREAS, The legislature has found and declared that the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the San Gabriel Mountains, Puente Hills, and San Jose Hills constitute a unique and important open space, environmental, anthropological, cultural, scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, and wildlife resource that should be held in trust to be preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, The people of the State of California have enacted the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), the Water, Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50), and the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), which provides funds for the RMC grant program; and

WHEREAS, The RMC may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of Division 22.8 the Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS, This action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and NOW

Therefore be it resolved that the RMC hereby:

1. FINDS that this action is consistent with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act and is necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of Division 22.8 of the Public Resources Code.
2. FINDS that the grant is consistent with the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), the Water, Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50), and the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), which provides funds for the RMC grant program.
3. FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
4. AUTHORIZES a grant in the amount not to exceed \$31,000 to the Watershed Conservation Authority in support of the Emerald Necklace Master Plan Project (RMC15016).
5. ADOPTS the staff report dated May 18, 2015.

~ End of Resolution ~

Motion _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS
CONSERVANCY on May 18, 2015.

Frank Colonna, Chair

ATTEST: _____
Terry Fujimoto
Deputy Attorney General